



# Apprenticeships Talking Points

## Overview

- The Women's Bureau is an agency that is part of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) focused on safeguarding the interests of working women, advocating for their equality and economic security, and promoting quality work environments.
- As we approach our Centennial and look back on how far women have come over the past 100 years, there is a lot for the Women's Bureau to celebrate. Today, women are almost half of our nation's workforce,<sup>1</sup> and their contributions are increasingly vital to both their families' economic security and our country's prosperity.
- As part of its work, the Women's Bureau collaborates with government, private, non-profit, educational, and labor partners to increase the number of women participating in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.
- Since January 2017, more than 5.6 million jobs have been created in the United States. In May 2019, there were 7.3 million job openings and job openings have exceeded job seekers for 15 straight months.<sup>2</sup>
- While the number of job openings remains near record levels, unemployment is near its lowest in fifty years. In 2019, the unemployment rate for adult women reached its lowest point since 1953.<sup>3</sup>
- With the United States economy thriving, job creation continuing at a rapid pace, and the unemployment rate at historic lows, our Nation's job creators are facing a tight labor market for in-demand skills. This provides the opportunity to advance and expand apprenticeships—a time-tested approach to workforce development.
- Apprenticeships offer an “earn as you learn” model that provides a pathway to family-sustaining wages, on-the-job training, and mentors, while reducing the need to take on student loans. At the same time, job creators get the opportunity to participate in the cultivation of a skilled workforce that is equipped to address the needs of the 21st-century economy. In short, it is a win-win.
- A majority of apprentices have a job waiting for them after they complete their program, or after graduation. More importantly, the average starting wage for someone who completes an apprenticeship is \$70,000 per year.<sup>4</sup>
- Recognizing the value of apprenticeships, the U.S. Department of Labor is working to grow and expand them across all industries and sectors of the economy.
- Traditionally, apprenticeships have been prevalent in the building trades, but—recognizing the benefits—other industries and sectors are gradually opening up to them as well. For example, there are now apprenticeship opportunities in sectors such as information technology, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and financial services.<sup>5</sup>
- The Women's Bureau aims to increase women's participation in apprenticeships, which stands at about 7%, creating pathways to family-sustaining jobs and promising careers.<sup>6</sup>
- According to a U.S. Department of Labor study:
  - ✓ 9 years after enrolling in a registered apprenticeship, women could expect to earn an average of \$47,586 more than they could have otherwise expected to earn.
  - ✓ After 36 years, they are projected to earn an average of \$98,718 more over the course of their career.<sup>7</sup>

## Women's Bureau Work in Action

- The Women's Bureau works to help expand apprenticeship opportunities for women.
- Currently, we are evaluating promising apprenticeship models for employers and workforce development centers, examining exemplary approaches to increasing diversity and inclusion in apprenticeship programs in a range of sectors and industries.



- The Bureau administers the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) grant program, which encourages women's employment in underrepresented occupations.<sup>8</sup>
  - ✓ The grant helps community-based organizations provide technical assistance and support services to increase women's participation in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs in a wide range of sectors, and help women enter and succeed in those jobs.
  - ✓ Since 2017, the Bureau has awarded approximately \$2.9 million in WANTO grants to community-based organizations across the country. We aim to continue growing the success of the grant program by expanding it to new industries and sectors.
- Additionally, the U.S. Department of Labor administers grants through National Equity Partner contracts, aimed at expanding apprenticeship opportunities across the country and delivering technical assistance for more widespread inclusion of women in such programs.
- The Women's Bureau is collaborating with U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to promote women's workplace safety and security by working closely with labor and industry associations to address the issues that matter to women in a wide range of sectors.
- To help expand access to apprenticeships, the Women's Bureau promotes paid parental leave and explores innovative solutions that help families access quality, affordable child care.

## Administration Initiatives

- Recognizing the significance of expanding apprenticeships for the Nation's economic growth and overall economic well-being, the Trump Administration has focused efforts on helping all Americans have access to apprenticeship opportunities. On June 15, 2017, President Trump signed the Executive Order Expanding Apprenticeships in America.<sup>9</sup>
- President Trump's Executive Order called for the consideration of a new apprenticeship model—Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAPs)—providing high-quality apprenticeship programs and opportunities in a market-driven system.
- The Executive Order also called for the Secretary of Labor to create and chair a Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion to “identify strategies and proposals to promote apprenticeships, especially in sectors where apprenticeship programs are insufficient.”<sup>10</sup>
  - ✓ Spearheading this effort, U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta brought together representatives from companies, labor, educational institutions, trade associations, and public officials.
  - ✓ The Task Force transmitted its Final Report to the President on May 10, 2018.<sup>11</sup> The Women's Bureau works in support of the conclusions of the Report, particularly in the advancement of access to and equity in apprenticeships for women.
- In 2018, the U.S. Department of Labor launched Apprenticeship.gov. The portal, continuously updated, serves as a one-stop source for all things apprenticeship.
- Career seekers can use the Apprenticeship Finder to find open apprenticeship opportunities to launch their career.
- Job creators can learn about the benefits of apprenticeship and post their available apprenticeship opportunities.

## Talking Point Sources

<sup>1</sup> Employment status of the civilian population by sex and age: June 2019.” Employment Situation, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t01.htm>

<sup>2</sup> “Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary,” Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, July 9, 2019: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.nr0.htm>

<sup>3</sup> “Statement by U.S. Secretary of Labor Acosta on June Jobs Report.” U.S. Department of Labor, July 5, 2019: <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/osec/osec20190705>



<sup>4</sup> “An Effectiveness Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Registered Apprenticeship in 10 States,” July 25, 2012, prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor by Mathematica Policy Research: [https://wdr.doleta.gov/research/fulltext\\_documents/etaop\\_2012\\_10.pdf](https://wdr.doleta.gov/research/fulltext_documents/etaop_2012_10.pdf); “Access to Registered Apprenticeship – A Proven Path to In-Demand Skills and the Middle Class,” Office on Apprenticeship, U.S. Department of Labor: [https://doleta.gov/OA/eo/pdf/EEO\\_Rule\\_Overview\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://doleta.gov/OA/eo/pdf/EEO_Rule_Overview_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> For examples, see: “Apprenticeship: Industry-Specific Resource Pages,” Workforce GPS, U.S. Department of Labor: <https://apprenticeship.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/08/11/17/33/Resource>

<sup>6</sup> “Apprenticeship Programs; Equal Employment Opportunity.” A proposed rule by the Labor Department, 80 FR 68908 (November 6, 2015) (amending 29 C.F.R. pt. 29 and 30), Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/11/06/2015-27316/apprenticeship-programs-equal-employment-opportunity>; “Pre-Apprenticeship: Pathways for Women into High-Wage Careers,” Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor: [https://doleta.gov/oa/preapp/pdf/pre\\_apprenticeship\\_guideforwomen.pdf](https://doleta.gov/oa/preapp/pdf/pre_apprenticeship_guideforwomen.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> “An Effectiveness Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Registered Apprenticeship in 10 States,” July 25, 2012, prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor by Mathematica Policy Research: [https://wdr.doleta.gov/research/fulltext\\_documents/etaop\\_2012\\_10.pdf](https://wdr.doleta.gov/research/fulltext_documents/etaop_2012_10.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> “WANTO Grant Program,” Women’s Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor: <https://www.dol.gov/wb/media/wantogrants.htm>

<sup>9</sup> “Presidential Executive Order Expanding Apprenticeships in America,” White House, June 15, 2017: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/3245>

<sup>10</sup> “Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion,” U.S. Department of Labor: <https://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/task-force.htm>

<sup>11</sup> “Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion: Final Report to the President of the United States,” U.S. Department of Labor, May 10, 2018: <https://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/docs/task-force-apprenticeship-expansion-report.pdf>